(c) to what extent the traditional exports like tea, jute, etc. have not kept pace with the overall rate of growth of 27 per cent; and

(d) the steps taken to give a boost to traditional exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Exports during April-October, 2004-05 are valued at US $ 40291.08 million which is 23.73 per cent higher than the level of US $ 32564.32 million during April-October, 2003-04.

(c) and (d) As per the data provided by the Tea Board under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Textiles, the exports of tea and Jute during April-October, 2004-05 are as under :

(US $ Million)

Commodities	April-October 2003-04	April-October 2004-05	Growth%
Tea	210	200	- 4.76
Jute Goods	116	83	- 29

All possible efforts are being taken by the Government to boost traditional exports. The major initiatives taken in respect of tea include India Tea Logo Promotion and Administration, Exporter Rating System, Intellectual Property Rights Protection, Factory Upgradation Scheme, Quality Upgradation Programme, Grant of financial assistance to tea exporters etc. The existing External Market Assistance (EMA) Scheme of Ministry of Textiles has been extended uptil March, 2007 to provide assistance to the jute maunfacturers. In addition assistance is also provided to exporters of Food Grade Jute Products.

Focus of the New Foreign Trade Policy

1012. SHRI B. J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the thrust of the New Foreign Trade Policy (NFTP), which proposes to replace the existing Export-Import (EXIM) policy;

(b) the details of the strategy that has been worked out under this new frame-work to double the exports of goods and services; and

(c) the details of the incentives and facilities that are proposed to be given to the industry to boost the exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN) : (a) The New Foreign Trade Policy takes an integrated view of the overall development of India's foreign trade. The objectives of the Foreign Trade Policy are two-fold—

(i) To double India's percentage share of global merchandise trade by 2009;

(ii) To act as an effective instrument of economic growth by giving a thrust to employment generation, especially in semi-urban and rural areas.

(b) and (c) The strategy for doubling India's export of goods and services is outlined in the Preamble to the Foreign Trade Policy. The details of the incentives and facilities to boost exports are also outlined in the 'Foreign Trade Policy'. A copy of the Foreign Trade Policy is available in the Parliament Library for reference.

SAARC Conference

1013. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the recently concluded SAARC Conference, he had called on the SAARC nations to build a strong framework of regional economic cooperation which should be workable and programme based; and

(b) if so, the response of the SAARC countries thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN) : (a) Yes, Sir. Minister of Commerce and Industry mentioned this in his Address to the Fourth Meeting of the SAARC Commerce Ministers held in Islamabad on 22-23 November, 2004 to underscore the need to make the SAARC more effective so as to enhance trade and commerce in the region.